

CLAYTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, November 1, 2010

The Center of Clayton - Multipurpose Room B & C

The following members were present:

Ira Berkowitz	Jessie Hoagland
Brad Bernstein	Omri Praiss
Mimi Deem	Eric Schneider
Judy Goodman	Mark Winings
Rosemary Hardy	

Excused/Absent

Alex Berger

Also present

Chris Cholley	Tim Hohenstein
Patty DeForrest	Patrick Magee
Eric Gruenenfelder	Jason Quinton
Liz Hickox	

Approval of Minutes: The minutes were approved pending a few corrections. Corrections to the October 4, 2010 meeting minutes were made on November 5, 2010.

Director's Report:

♦ **Dog Park Update** – Ms. DeForrest discussed the history of Dog Parks in Clayton to the Commission prior to addressing the audience. She stated that Dog Park discussions have been taking place for about five years. In November of 2009 the Dog Park Committee presented a report to the Commission. In February 2010 the same presentation was made to the BOA. The BOA said if land were identified in the City of Clayton, it would explore the idea of a Dog Park. In late September, Dr. Meyer, President of Concordia Seminary, agreed to lease an additional 1.5 acres of land to the City for a Dog Park. The City currently leases 1.5 acres from the Seminary near Captain Elementary.

At this time, Ms. DeForrest and her staff are in the preliminary stages of identifying a site, informing supporters and non-supporters. The next steps are to survey the area residents, followed by hosting public forums if necessary.

The original map with squares on it showed the current 1.5 acre park, as well as a possible location of a Dog Park. Ms. DeForrest noted that the proposed Dog Park would be 1.5 acres. The exact area has not been determined. The City does not have funds in the operational budget this year or the following three years for a Dog Park. Therefore, this project would have to be privately funded. If the project were to move forward, we could walk the area in Concordia Park with Dr. Meyer, in order to determine the exact location. Homes are along the area of the proposed site. Concordia would like the minimum size of the Dog Park to be 1.5 acres.

Many residents in the DeMun and Hi Pointe areas, whose homes are in close proximity to Concordia Park, attended this meeting. These residents are strongly opposed to a Dog Park and several of them spoke about their oppositions to the park. Mr. Jeff Hockman who lives across from the park asked what the process was in determining the location of Dog Park on Concordia's property. Ms. DeForrest stated that the Parks and Recreation Department asked the community if they were interested in having a Dog Park in Clayton. The results let us know that there is general support. Mr. Hockman also stated that he will determine whether he is for or against the Dog Park once the location has been set. The Commission will stake out the area to see what area would be best. Mr. Paul Bridgiman, from the Hi Pointe Association, said the sense is most people in that region are opposed. A petition went around in the neighborhood and over two hundred signatures were received from opponents of a fenced Dog Park in Concordia Park. (The group gave Ms. DeForrest a copy of the signed petition.)

Other comments made during the discussion included were:

- The park area is there for the neighborhood. A fenced area in the park would be an eye sore.
- The park is a very beautiful landmark in the area. Dog Parks are not attractive and would take away from the ambiance of the park.

- Parking is a concern because this area is already very busy and parking is limited.
- There is no space for a Dog Park
- Community building already is in existence.
- There are many children who utilize the areas and more traffic would be very risky.
- Mr. Praiss said he visited a Dog Park with his son and had a true appreciation for it. A resident at the meeting said she visited a few Dog Parks in the area and said they are not attractive. There is not a blade of grass in some of the Dog Parks.
- It was suggested that Concordia should take some paved land and turn it into Dog Park.

The overall consensus from property owners, who attended the meeting, is they are strongly opposed to a Dog Park in their area.

Ms. Dubin, from the Dog Park committee, stated a Dog Park promotes community building. The President of the Seminary provided the City with a generous donation of land. There would be an area for small dogs and a separate area for large dogs. Ms. Dubin pointed out that some of the information presented in the petition was not true. For instance, there would never be 1,600 families utilizing a Dog Park. The park would function as a self-policed area. Ms. DeForrest made it clear to the audience that she was the person who provided the map with squares on it, as well as saying the Dog Park would most likely have a six foot fence, as most Dog Parks have five to six feet fences. Mr. Uchitelle, from the Dog Park committee, stated that before the survey is distributed we need to stake out the areas; he agrees that the Dog Park should not be along DeMun Rd, and it should not have a six foot fence. The fences at Dog Parks in New York are not taller than four and a half feet. Further, Mr. Uchitelle said the committee has looked and looked for other locations, and this generous offer from the Seminary is an area that may or may not work. He questioned the fact that the City of Clayton would not be able to assist with the funding of a Dog Park. Ms. DeForrest reiterated the fact that funds are not allocated this year or for the next three years.

The Commission Members Dog Park Discussion: The City has a responsibility to the community. This land would be leased to the City as a park. Most Dog Parks are run through Parks and Recreation Departments. We do not believe Concordia Seminary is interested in leasing this area to a private group. If they were to consider that in the future, the lease would have to be approved by the City. The Parks and Recreation Department would be responsible for managing Dog Park members. A resident survey will be done in house because 45% of residents who completed the 2010 Citizens Survey said they were interested in a Dog Park. Mr. Berkowitz said he thinks the Dog Park is DOA and we should not move forward with the survey. Ms. Goodman said we need to conduct a survey in order to get an objective assessment from residents, especially since some of the information in the petition was inaccurate. Ms. DeForrest asked the Commission to review the survey and provide feedback. Residents who live within two blocks and who would be immediately affected by a Dog Park will be surveyed.

Annual Reports: (Please refer to the attached 2010 Outdoor Facility PowerPoint handouts for detailed information)

♦ **Shaw Park Tennis Center** – Ms. Hickox and Mr. Hohenstein reviewed the Shaw Park Tennis Center 2010 operations. Tennis Center revenue was down this year and is attributed to high temperatures in June, July and August. Maintenance expenses were high due to court crack repairs; the majority of other expenditures are for staffing costs. Seventy-five percent of the Tennis Center revenue comes from programming. The 16th annual Community Alliance Tournament and the USTA National Tournaments were highlights of the season. 2011 plans include a season kick-off party, parent child lessons, new camps, drop-in classes, and a continued partnership with USTA.

♦ **Shaw Park Aquatic Center** – Mr. Quinton, Mr. Magee, and Mr. Cholley reviewed the Shaw Park Aquatic Center 2010 operations. Revenue for Shaw Park Aquatic Center increased across the board with season pass sales making up 52% of the revenue generated at the pool. Expenditures are mainly due to staffing costs. The Master's program is part of rental usage and the program more than pays for the cost of staff. Improvements are being made at the Dock Concession Stand every year and cleaning procedure updates were made based on survey comments. The reusable cup sales have been a huge success. Programming participation increased this season because both swimming camps were put back into the schedule. A few of the season highlights include: participation in the world record breaking swim lesson event, maintained safety as a top priority, held the annual mock rescue demonstration and added new shade structures.

♦ **Financial** – The financial report will be presented at the December 6, 2010 meeting due to the duration of this meeting.

Old Business / New Business: There is no old or new business to report.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Denise Ucinski